

**REMARKS**

Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the specification and claims by the current amendment. The attached page is captioned "**VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE**".

In the unlikely event that the transmittal letter is separated from this document and the Patent Office determines that an extension and/or other relief is required, applicant petitions for any required relief including extensions of time and authorizes the Assistant Commissioner to charge the cost of such petitions and/or other fees due in connection with the filing of this document to **Deposit Account No. 03-1952** referencing docket no. 333772000101.

Respectfully submitted,

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By:

Ararat Kapouytian  
Ararat Kapouytian  
Registration No. 40,044

Morrison & Foerster LLP  
425 Market Street  
San Francisco, California 94105-2482  
Telephone: (415) 268-6147  
Facsimile: (415) 268-7522

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**VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE**

The paragraph beginning at page 1, line 5 has been amended as follows:

The present invention relates to a semiconductor device testing apparatus suitable for testing semiconductor integrated circuit elements which are typical of semiconductor devices, and more particularly to a semiconductor device testing apparatus of the type in which semiconductor devices are transported to a testing section or test section where they are tested for their electrical characteristics, followed by being carried out of the test section and then being sorted out into conforming articles and non-conforming articles on the basis of the test results, and to a test tray for use in the IC tester in which [a]the tray is moved in a circulating manner along a predetermined path of transport.

The paragraph beginning at page 1, line 18 (and ending on page 2, line 10) has been amended as follows:

Many [of ]semiconductor device testing apparatuses (commonly called IC tester) for measuring the electrical characteristics of semiconductor devices to be tested (commonly called DUT (device under test)) by applying a signal of a predetermined test pattern to the devices have a semiconductor transporting and handling (processing) apparatus (commonly called handler) integrally incorporated therein for transporting semiconductor devices to a testing section where they are brought into electrical contact with device sockets on the tester head of the testing apparatus (a component of the testing apparatus for supplying and receiving various electrical signals for testing purposes), followed by carrying the tested semiconductor devices out of the testing section and sorting them out into conforming and non-conforming articles on the basis of the test results. The semiconductor device testing apparatus having integrated therein the handler of the type described above is herein termed simply "IC tester". In the following disclosure the present invention will be described by taking semiconductor integrated circuit elements (which will be referred to as IC hereinafter) which are typical of semiconductor devices by example for the convenience of explanation.

The paragraph beginning at page 2, line 11 has been amended as follows:

[illegible]

The sorting operation in the unloader section 8 will now be described. In the IC tester in Fig. 11, the operation of sorting and transshipping tested ICs is performed with respect to universal trays arranged adjacent to each of the first and second positions A and B. Specifically, arranged at the first position A are universal trays 1a and 1b. [Let it assume] It is assumed that classification categories 1 and 2 are assigned to the universal trays 1a and 1b, respectively[, while]. While the test tray 3 is stopped at the first position A, only the tested ICs belonging to the categories 1 and 2 are picked up from the test tray and transferred onto the corresponding universal trays 1a and 1b, respectively. Once the test tray 3 stopping at the first position A has been depleted of the ICs belonging to the categories 1 and 2, the test tray is moved to the second position B.

The IC carrier 34 holds an [18]IC in place with its leads or pins PN exposed downwardly as shown in Fig. 13. The tester head 100 is provided with an IC socket having contacts 101 extending upwardly from the top surface thereof. The exposed pins PN of the IC are urged against the contacts 101 of the IC socket to establish electrical connection between the IC and the socket. To this end, a pusher 103 for pushing and holding an IC down is mounted above the tester head and is configured to push the IC accommodated in an IC carrier 34 from above to bring the pins PN into contact with the tester head.

In testing ICs in the testing section 42, a relatively long time required per [a ]test necessitates a corresponding long waiting time until an IC carried into the soak chamber 41 as loaded on a test tray comes up for testing in the testing section 42, meaning that the test tray

transporting mechanism need not be so fast in operation. In addition, the number of test trays to be stacked in the soak chamber 41 can be reduced.

The paragraph beginning at page 17, line 12 has been amended as follows:

This, however, requires a very long time to go through the test on all of the ICS, leading to a poor utilization ratio of the expensive IC tester and hence the serious disadvantage that the testing cost per [an ]IC is greatly [an ]increased.

The paragraph beginning at page 17, line 23 (and ending on page 18, line 5) has been amended as follows:

In addition, an increase in simultaneous measurement throughput in number of ICs [in number of ICs ]for simultaneous measurement would require an increase in the number of ICs which can be handled by the transporting and handling mechanism including the X-Y transports 71 and 81 for the loader section 7 and the unloader section 8, respectively. While the throughput in number of ICs depends on the performance or throughput capacity of this transporting and handling mechanism, in the case that the testing time is relatively long, there would be no particular problem if the throughput in number of ICs was not increased so much.

The paragraph beginning at page 18, line 14 has been amended as follows:

However, although it would not take much cost to make the speed of operation of the test tray transporting mechanism of only [to a ]limited extent, it would require substantial cost to increase the operation speed to nearly the maximal limit, providing the disadvantage of rendering [he]the initial cost of the entire IC tester very expensive. On top of that, in order to transport test trays at high speed, it is required to increase the throughput in number of ICs of the transporting and handling mechanism including the X-Y transports 71 and 81. Not only is it costly to increase the throughput in number of ICs, but also[ is] there is naturally a limit to increasing the throughput in number of ICs. It should also be noted that when the testing time in the testing section 42 is relatively short, increasing the simultaneous measurement throughput in number of ICs would not lead to a significant enhancement of efficiency.

The paragraph beginning at page 19, line 3 has been amended as follows:

A first object of the present invention is to provide an IC tester which is capable of reducing the time required [before completion of]to complete testing on all of the ICs to thereby enhance the utilization ratio.

The paragraph beginning at page 19, line 10 has been amended as follows:

A third object of the present invention is to provide an IC tester which provides an increased throughput in number of ICs through the loader and unloader sections to thereby shorten the time required [before completion of]to complete testing on all of the ICs to be tested.

The paragraph beginning at page 43, line 11 has been amended as follows:

The vertical transport mechanism is at rest in operation until two test trays are transported onto the lowermost stage. Once two test trays [has]have been transported from the testing section 42 onto the lowermost stage of the vertical transport mechanism, the vertical transport mechanism is actuated to move the test trays on the successive stages upwardly by one stage in the vertical direction. While two test trays on the lowermost stage are moved up to the uppermost stage by the upward movement of the successive stages by actuation of the vertical transport mechanism, the tested ICs are relieved of either heat or cold to be restored to the outside temperature (room temperature).

The paragraph beginning at page 94, line 20 (and ending on page 95, line 19) has been amended as follows:

In the fifth embodiment described above, the depth of the constant temperature chamber 4 is expanded by a dimension corresponding approximately to one transverse width (length of the minor edge) of the rectangular test tray 3 and two paths of transport for test trays are provided for the section of path extending from the soak chamber 41 to the testing section 42 so that two test trays may be substantially simultaneously transported along the respective transport paths independently of each other, or alternatively the width of the test tray transport path for the section extending from the soak chamber 41 to the testing section 42 is broadened to be approximately equal to the sum of transverse widths of two test trays so that two test trays in an integrally joined state may be simultaneously transported. However, in the case that the time required per test in the testing section 42 is relatively short, it is preferable that with the

construction of the test tray transport path extending from the loader section 7 through the soak chamber 41 and the testing section 42 of the constant temperature chamber 4 to the exit chamber 5 being retained as in the illustrated prior art IC tester, the depth (length in the Y-axis direction) of the loader section 7 and the unloader section 8 be expanded by a dimension corresponding approximately to one transverse width (length of the minor edge) of the rectangular test tray 3, and two test tray transport paths are provided for the section of path extending from the unloader section 8 to the loader section 7 so that two test trays may be substantially simultaneously transported along the respective transport paths independently of each other.